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Review to make municipal elections more transparent and secure

MLA committee will lead review, gather public input

Edmonton... Albertans are being asked for input into the legislation that guides elections in Alberta – in an effort to increase voter turnout and make the election process more transparent and secure.

"We want to be sure that we have appropriate election standards," said Minister of Municipal Affairs Rob Renner. "A more secure and transparent election process will help ensure integrity and public confidence in our election system."

The *Local Authorities Election Act* is reviewed after general municipal and school board elections, which are held every three years. This year there will be an enhanced review, led by an MLA committee which will focus on local election procedures and issues, including voter identification and lists; special ballots; campaign advertising; and terms of office. The committee will also incorporate the recommendations of the Clark Inspection Report, which looked into alleged irregularities in the 2004 Calgary Ward 10 election. The committee will prepare a report with recommendations for improvements to the legislation.

The committee consists of Ray Prins, MLA for Lacombe-Ponoka; Lloyd Snelgrove, MLA for Vermilion-Lloydminster; and Ronald Liepert, MLA for Calgary-West committee.

"Public participation in the election process is paramount," said Prins, committee chair. "The committee will be seeking input from Albertans during the review on ways to encourage increased voter turnout."

A discussion paper and questionnaire will be available on the Municipal Affairs website. To receive a copy of the paper and questionnaire via mail call (780) 427-2225 (dial 310-0000 for toll free access outside Edmonton). **Deadline for submissions is October 28.** Any submissions received by the committee will be made public. The report will be made public by the end of the year.

Open houses will be held in a number of communities across the province:

Bonnyville – September 28
Grande Prairie – September 29
Calgary – October 5–6, November 1
Edmonton – October 11-12, October 18
Fort McMurray – October 13
Red Deer – October 31
Lethbridge – November 2
Medicine Hat – November 3

Any proposed amendments will come into effect before the next general municipal elections in 2007. The committee can also make recommendations to the Minister regarding future action on any election issues that cannot be implemented prior to the 2007 general elections.